



USS ESSEX (LHD 2) Public Affairs
FPO AP 96643-1661
Voice: /DSN: 312-735-9167/COMM: 619-735-9167
Fax: DSN 315-453-5868/COM Fax 808-653-5868
POC: MCC(SW/AW) Christopher E. Tucker
pao@lhd2.navy.mil



ESX 11-072PR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 27, 2011

Japanese College Students Tour Essex

Story by Mass Communication Specialist Third Class Linda S. Swearingen

SASEBO, Japan (May 27, 2011) – Japanese students from the University of Fukuoka had the opportunity to see the forward deployed amphibious assault ship USS Essex (LHD 2) up close and personal during a ship tour May 27.

The tour gave the 18 Japanese university students a chance to see the many facets of the ship, including the well deck, hangar bay, medical department, and the flight deck.

The tour was a part of the Fukuoka University and U.S. Consulate, Fukuoka, Joint Program where college students are able to tour the Sasebo Naval Base and tour a U.S. naval ship.

“I think it is a great opportunity for our crew to give tours of the ship to our Japanese friends in order for them to share their pride and knowledge of the ship and to appreciate the common bond between citizens of all maritime nations,” said Capt. David Fluker, commanding officer of Essex. “Essex has a long tradition of working hand-in-hand with Japanese Sailors and it is important for our crew to share the experience with Japanese citizens.”

The tour helped to show the Japanese students how a U.S. naval ship operates and familiarize them with some of the daily operations of the crewmembers on board.

The American Consulate of Fukuoka coordinated the tour for the students from the University of Fukuoka.

“This is the second tour of the Essex that I have been on,” said Kenji Miyaishi, public affairs program assistant at the American Consulate of Fukuoka. “This is a very popular tour. The consul has done about seven or eight tours so far of Essex.”

For the Japanese students who attended, touring the Essex showed them aspects of the ship of which they were not previously aware.

“I was surprised to learn that there were so many people that worked on the ship and that the ship does rescue operations,” said Yusuke Teshima, a student at the University of Fukuoka.

Many of the students had particular aspects of the ship they were interested in.

“The flight deck was my favorite part of the tour because of the helicopters and learning about the Harriers,” said Ryutaro Yoshimoto, a student at the University of Fukuoka.

Although the tour of Essex was a fun-filled field trip for the students of the University of Fukuoka, it also proved to have deeper meaning to the students because of Essex’ recent involvement in Operation Tomodachi.

“It is important to show our Japanese hosts our ship and its capabilities to give them an better appreciation for the value and strength of the alliance between Japan and the United States,” said Fluker. “Hosting tours such as this, helps improve an already strong relationship between our two nations and express the alliance’s commitment to maintaining peace and stability in the Pacific region.”